Express Ads

FOR SALE

RAILROADIANA for sale: Traction timetables, reproductions (17 different) and originals, North Shore Line Annual Reports from 1917 to 1948, steam road timetables. Send 20¢ for listings. Herb Danneman, 14425 Woodland Place, Brookfield, WI 53005.

20TH CENTURY RAILROAD CLUB is looking for new members to expand. For membership information send long SSAE to 20th Century R.R. Club, 9914 Longwood, Chicago IL 60643.

RAPID RAIL TRANSIT is needed to clear our polluted streets. Display the truth about autos with our unique bumperstrip: DANGER! DEADLY EXHAUST. 50¢ each, 3/$1.00 postpaid. Message Media, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

WANTED

NEED OFFICIAL GUIDES from the 1930's and 1940's. Please indicate issues you have to sell, their condition and price. Box 2, c/o Rail Travel Newsletter.

EXPRESS ADS are now available for your use. You get your message FAST to readers of Rail Travel Newsletter. Cost only $1.00 (minimum) for up to 3 lines; extra lines 35¢ each or 3 for $1.00. A line is 56 spaces. Closing date is just 7 days before date of issue. Print ad clearly and send to Express Ads, Rail Travel Newsletter, P.O. Box 9007, Berkeley, California 94709.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RAIL FILM FESTIVAL. Interested in attending, entering films, helping organize? Write: Film Festival, c/o RTN.

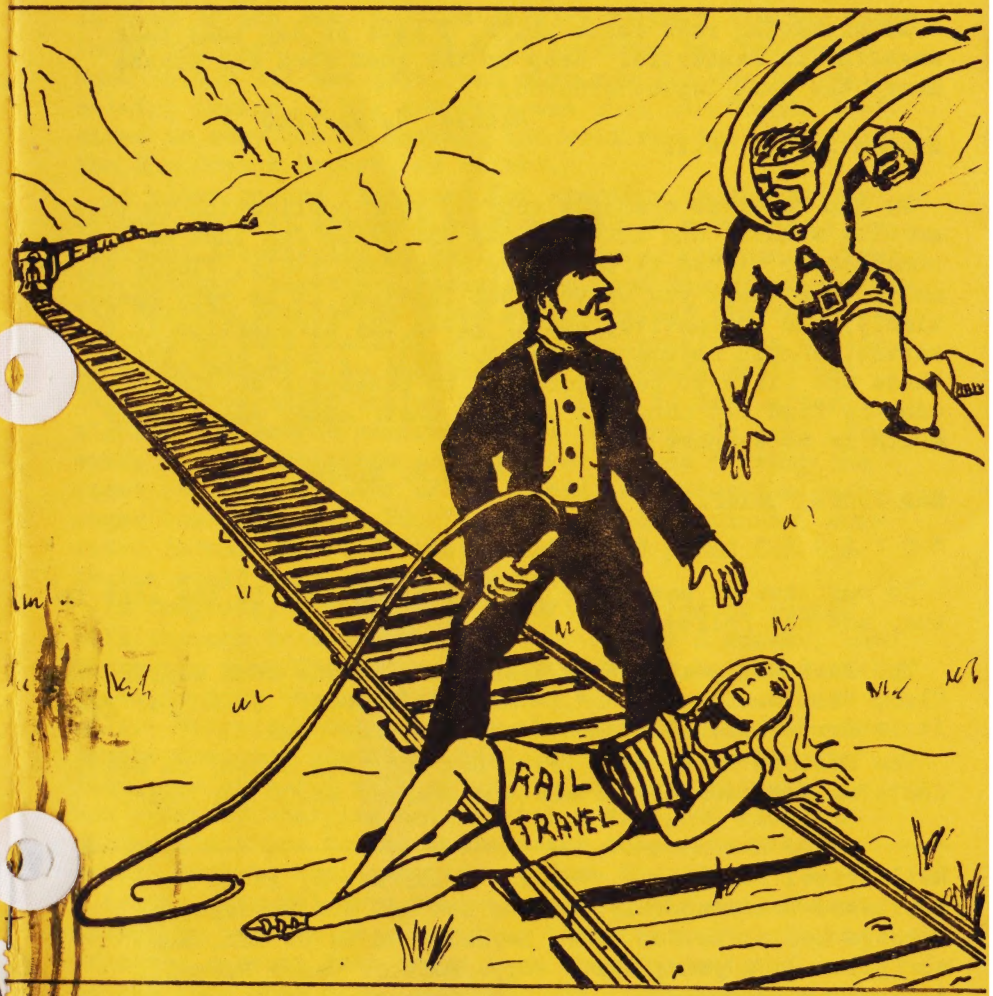
To:

FROM: Message Media
PO Box 9007
Berkeley CA 94709 USA

FIRST CLASS MAIL

RAIL TRAVEL newsletter

Volume 1 May 3, 1971 Number 11



Enter Amtrak!

FOR THIS SPECIAL Amtrak issue of Rail Travel Newsletter, we are omitting some of the usual departments and features in order to bring you coverage of the historic beginning of Amtrak operation and the end of most private railroad service in the United States. The features will resume in the next issue, dated May 17.

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Michael J. Martino
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My son received a sample copy of your publication in this morning's mail, and although not the train fan that he is, I nonetheless picked it up at the breakfast table. Please allow me to compliment you on your publication: it is very readable, timely, and attractive, and if given the circulation it deserves, should become a great success. I only hope that those who claim to be interested in passenger service in this country find out about it and put their money where their mouth is to support you.

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The Western Railroader (P.O. Box 668, San Mateo, CA 94401) contains news monthly of western trains. $2.00 per year.

Rail Travel Newsletter, Vol 1, No 11, May 3, 1971. Published twice monthly, on the 1st and 3rd Mondays, by Message Media, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709 USA. Subscription $4 a year; 25¢ a copy. Editor: James Russell. Artwork: Michael Cohen. Contributors to this issue: Robert Glover and Lawson K. Hill.

AMTRAK GETS UNDERWAY

April 30 arrived, and with it the end of a number of passenger trains around the nation. It was an historic weekend. The following day the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, Amtrak, took over operation of the 180-odd trains it has included in its network.

It was only in the last days of April that the participating railroads finally signed contracts with Amtrax, and there were three notable omissions: Southern Railway did not join, and must continue running its Southern Crescent and Piedmont on its own until 1975 (the former is part of the New York-Los Angeles through sleeper train initiated last Fall, which will continue to operate). Rock Island did not join, and must run its own two remaining trains. A big surprise was that Rio Grande decided to stay out of Amtrak, and will run its one train, the Rio Grande Zephyr, as before.

As plans became finalized for starting up the Amtrak system, several attempts to sidetrack it were made. The National Association of Rail Passengers, two union groups, the Potomac Passengers Association, and the Michigan Public Service Commission filed suits against the railroads contending that handling of employee layoffs was unfair. NARP and others also charged that railroads could not legally drop their trains May 1, since 30 days after signing the Amtrak contracts were required by law. However, these complaints got nowhere; judges hearing the cases decided in favor of the roads' quitting the passenger business April 30. Up until the last minute, however, it was uncertain whether Amtrak's plans for the trains would take effect as scheduled.

In Congress, Senator Mike Mansfield tried to push a bill through to delay the start of Amtrak 6 months, but there was insufficient support for it, so he tried instead to take the provision on as a rider on another bill. Congressional attempts also failed, however. The Senate Commerce Committee held hearings on Amtrak the last week of April with an eye to possibly delaying it, but ended up charging Amtrak with a $100,000 study of needed additions to the system; the corporation is to report back to the committee by June 30.

As the privately-run trains neared their end, there seemed to be more people riding them for nostalgic and historic reasons than there were checking out the new Amtrak runs when May 1 arrived. The great swelling of passengers in the last days of April was said to be the biggest turnout since World War II. Most trains were

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running many extra cars to handle the crowds. Santa Fe San Diegans (L.A.-San Diego) ran 20-car trains over the short route, and in the San Joaquin Valley the SP's Daylight was said to be handling passengers like a streetcar, great numbers traveling short distances.

Union Pacific, always the road to do things with style and glamour, put on its No. 8444 steamer to pull the last City of L.A. trains each way between Cheyenne and Laramie.

The oldest name train in America, the SP Del Monte, had its last run April 30 from San Francisco to Monterey. The consist was swollen by extra private railway cars and additional coaches. It was also the last passenger train to leave the S.F. terminal. Upon its 8:00pm arrival in Monterey, the cars were immediately deadheaded back to S.F.

In Portland, UP presented the Oregon Historical Society with a full dining car table setting at a ceremony marking the last run of the City of Portland. The Nancy Hanks (see Paul Rayton's article on page 6) had 500 passengers on its last run, and the Pocahontas carried 750. The most ceremony and the most tears were found in places where train service was ending, as on the route of the Cannon Ball. Elsewhere there was less interest, in places where Amtrak was to take over and hopefully upgrade service the next day.

First Amtrak Trains

As Amtrak began running the trains on May 1, the gist of the reports in the media was that the trains were pretty much on time, and that passenger loads were not heavy.

Amtrak had published their first nationwide schedule on April 21, but few people had one as the trains began to roll on new schedules. (Individual roads will have their own schedules printed, and Amtrak timetables can be had from NRPC, 955 L'Enfant Plaza, Washington D.C. 20024.)

Secretary Volpe got things started by riding a Metroliner from Washington to New York, where he held a press conference. Roger Lewis, newly elected president of Amtrak (though not yet approved by Congress) also spoke (Lewis comes from General Dynamics, builders of the infamous F-111 fighter plane). Mayor Daley of Chicago christened the first Amtrak train to leave there for Seattle, the Empire Builder.

Amtrak's schedule preserved the names of many trains such as the Broadway Limited, the Silver Star, the Super Chief and the Denver Zephyr. Train numbers were also retained as much as possible, though resulting in some duplication. One plan that fizzled was Amtrak's scheme for reviving the California Zephyr (the name appears in the schedule) by placing Zephyr cars from Rio Grande on the S.F.-Chicago run through Colorado. When Rio Grande pulled out at the last minute, a

quick change was made to route the train over the old City of S.F. route, thus restoring train service to Wyoming in the process. But the Zephyr cars are not now available to use on the run, and the schedule was changed at the last minute resulting in much confusion. Instead of leaving Oakland at 7:30am, the train (which SP is now still calling nos. 101-102) leaves at 9:50am and reaches Ogden at 4:30am, where one may either continue on the same through train to Chicago or wait over until 7:40am to transfer to the Rio Grande Zephyr, which arrives in Denver at 11:00pm. Denver arrival is 5:30pm if one goes straight through but misses the Colorado scenery. The change was a big disappointment to railfans who felt the new Zephyr run would be a big drawing card for Amtrak.

As the first Amtrak S.F./Oakland-Chicago train pulled out on time May 1 (see photo, p.9) it was drawn by a single "F" unit and consisted of a baggage-dormitory car, 2 coaches (a UP car and a blue-&-white Great Northern car), a full SP diner, an SP full-length dome lounge, and 2 sleepers (the BN Silver Pelican off the Denver Zephyr, and an SP car from the Sunset). It ran without a single stop to its first station, Sacramento, arriving early. The SP diner had no linen but SP is now ordering linen for all dining cars. A regular SP menu was in use, but printed without SP's name; some had blue Amtrak stickers. Train watchers are having fun observing the changing consists: seen in Oakland ready to leave on this train May 6 were these cars--UP dorm car, BN coach ("Silver Shaft"), GN coach in green & orange, NP Lewis & Clark Traveler's Rest car off the North Coast Ltd., BN diner in green & white ("Lake Michigan"), SP dome lounge, BN sleeper "Silver Swan", and an SP Sunset sleeper. Quite an interesting mix.

The first Seattle-San Diego through train (unnamed in the Amtrax schedule, but mostly called here the "thru train") is pictured on pp.8-9. Its north-moving counterpart left San Diego the first time 7:00am May 2. It had 3 cars, an ATSF lounge, SP coach & SP sleeper. The announcement came on: "Santa Fe train number 12 now leaving ... Thank you for going Amtrak." At Los Angeles there was some shuffling around this first try to get the cars properly oriented & coupled to the 6 SP cars waiting, ending up with the 2 sleepers facing backwards for the run to Seattle. It passed the southbound thru train at the San Luis Obispo station.

Amtrak's first ad appeared May 3 in newspapers in cities served by the system. The only variation in ads was in the names of cities served and the phone numbers to call. The bottom portion of the ad is reproduced on page 13, showing

(continued on page 13)

KEEPING TRACK

...with Paul Rayton

(A regular NYR feature. Each issue presents another review-critique of a selected pre-Amtrak train.)

NANCY HANKS II

Date: Friday, August 28, 1970

The one American passenger train run that comes closest to a train ride through Africa is the Central of Georgia's NANCY HANKS II, running daily between Savannah and Atlanta, Georgia.

The best direction to ride this train is from Savannah to Atlanta. That way you get an all daylight ride and have the sun at your back, giving you better light for seeing the truly remarkable countryside.

There is a no-charge reservation system for assigning seating. At the ticket window we were assigned seats 14 and 16 in car A-3. The only timetable I had was an Official Guide, rather bulky in one's pocket. So I asked if there was a timetable available. The agent replied, "Do you need it, or are you a...uh...collector?" Of course I need it, else why would I ask, I think to myself--but that doesn't mean I don't want to collect it too. But don't let on too much or you might not get one. So: "Ah, I'll need it, please." Argument won. I guess the timetable was printed on gold--the paper was yellow, anyway.

This train is an anomaly in 1970--it runs a dome car and a grill lounge "serving all meals and beverages." I wondered where the people come from to patronize this train, serving, as it does, a rather depressed section of the country.

We looked at the other coaches in our consist. They were "typical" standard coaches, with linoleum floors, dark seat covers, and rather small windows. The dark green exterior somehow makes them appear heavy. Could it be an association with the old Pullman-Standard sleeping cars? The dark brown interior furnishings were not exactly a cheery sight at this early hour. At least the windows were clean.

We leave promptly at 7:00am. As we pull out we are treated to a truly spectacular show of sunrise and billowing cumulus clouds. Humidity this summer day in Savannah was only slightly less than a Turkish bath. In fact, I half expected that, were I to squeeze some air between my hands, it would actually drip water. There had been some rain during the night, a light almost tropical spattering. Now there were droplets on the windows, each droplet mirroring a miniature sun within itself.

We moved out of Savannah very soon and found ourselves in the wilds of Georgia. As soon as civilization is left behind, tall pines start blending with low-lying fog. Looking out, one would think he was out in the Veldt--wide fields with occasional trees. We could see perhaps 150 yards on either side before fog obscured our vision.

Since the hour was early and the fog too heavy to see much, we chose this time for breakfast. If you should ride this train, have your breakfast in the dining car! Don't eat at home! The dining service on this train was something that really surprised and impressed me. NANCY HANKS II carries a quite respectable diner. It is smaller than some, but the crew is competent and the food is well prepared.

As you enter the dining area, a warm glow from the grille of the charcoal burner is a happy sight. Some of my favorite elements are absent, such as linen napkins and tablecloths, but at least there is good food at good prices. The most expensive club breakfast in only $1.80, and includes everything: fruit/juice/cereal; two eggs with ham/two eggs with three strips bacon/corned beef hash with egg; toast; and beverage. I found the prices very fair, and better than that, the food was competently cooked. I decided to try the sugar-cured ham, remembering my experience on THE POCAHONTAS of a few days ago. This turned out to be very tasty and cooked just right, which is to say not dried out. Grits are served on request and, while a northerner like myself is no authority on grits, I found these disappointing--dry and clumpy. My wife chose the bacon and eggs and was well pleased. The bacon was fine and crispy and it was attractively arranged around the eggs. A very satisfying meal, and one that I can recommend without exception.

Don't tarry too long over breakfast if you wish to see some of the famous hanging "Spanish moss" of the deep South. This route takes you northward and inland from Savannah and I found that later in the day there was very little of the moss on the trees. Thus, we adjourned to the dome.

The dome car is one of those Pullman-Standard-built domes, the type that also runs on the Southern Crescent. The distinguishing feature of these cars is that all the windows are flat panes of glass, in contrast to the Budd Company's windows of curved glass. From a passenger's standpoint the flat windows have both good and bad points. In photography they are both a help and a hindrance. The curved windows create distracting, abstract color splotches. The flat windows, however, give a much more easily recognized image when they do reflect, and, depending on the light, you may end up with two distinct photographic images. (All this can be avoided by opening the vestibule doors--but the view on this route is better from the dome.)

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And then we come to a town. And once again I am amazed. There are numerous tiny hamlets dotting the route. We do not stop at every little settlement, though I imagine that NANCY HANKS is not a complete stranger in those places, either. For instance, in the 13 miles between the stops of Rocky Ford and Millen, there are also the two tiny (shanty) towns of Scarboro and Paramore. Other colorful names like Haleyondale and Ogeechee and Toomsboro have their villages too. As we move along at maybe 50 miles an hour, I get the impression of riding through the jungle in Africa, and coming every now and then to a small native village. Only this is the United States and these are our citizens living here in wretched tarpaper novels. What, no bamboo? Is this "pride of ownership"? I saw a pickup truck running along on a parallel dirt road--probably the landlord (a farmer in the area) come to collect the rent.

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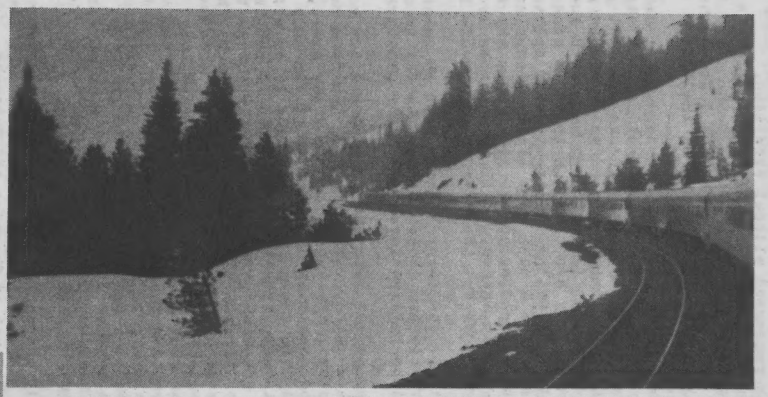
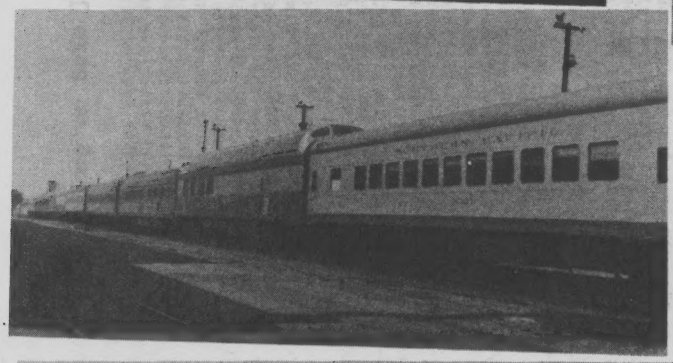
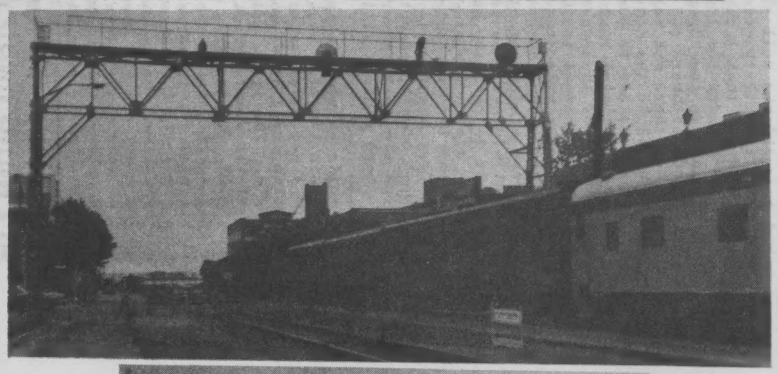
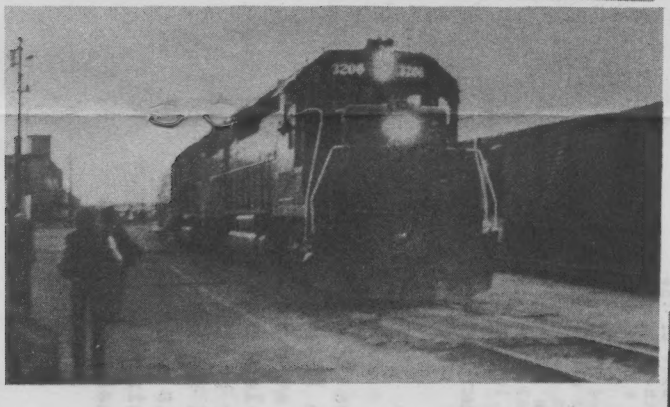
Historic Trains Come and Go









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Last weekend was a time to remember. For the photographer it was a challenge and a frustration--there was too much to cover all at once. RTN got these shots of history-making trains (see identifying number diagram at right): (1) The last San Joaquin Daylight has just pulled into Oakland April 30, one hour twenty minutes late, pulling 13 cars behind its 3 engines. Some wag has affixed a sign "Last Pokey" to the lead engine. (2) The last excursion train to be run under SP auspices, the Truckee Limited, climbs the hill to Donner Summit under snowclouds on April 25. Pulled by 5 freshly painted "F" units, the 21-car train carried about 750 people (see story elsewhere in this issue). (3) The last City of San Francisco stops briefly at Berkeley on the last lap of its trip into Oakland April 30. The long train carried two domes--some cars were being deadheaded west for start of Amtrak operation. (4) The very first Amtrak train to run in the Western states is leaving Oakland on a cloudy May 1 morning--the Coast Daylight, not named in the Amtrak schedule and given the wrong number as well, is on time and looking weirdly impressive with 5 engines ahead of 5 sparsely filled passenger cars. We see it passing Oakland's Jack London Square--the first regular passenger train to do so since the demise of the WP California Zephyr in March 1970--, slowly rumbling along 1st Street

(continued on page 12)

Nancy Hanks, incidentally, was a famous trotting mare of the 1930's, and the train and its decor (particularly in the diner) commemorate this heritage. As we walk in for lunch, we pass through a "bar/lounge" furnished with a "hitching rail" running the length of the area. With the surrounding pictures of horses and plush appointments, it could be the dinner's club at Churchill Downs. This lounge is a part of the dining car. Thus the dining area has space for only six tables.

The waiter faintly resembled, I thought, former President Harry S. Truman. The service was efficient, though he was not a particularly outgoing fellow.

Luncheon and dinner on the NANCY HANKS II are both served from the same menu. But it lived up to the high expectations aroused by our pleasant experience at breakfast. Very good food at reasonable prices. The most expensive full course, table d' hote serving is $3.50, and features either pot roast or sugar-cured ham. I ordered the chopped beef steak with mushroom sauce ($2.60). My wife wanted the bacon and tomato sandwich, a la carte for $1.10.

The meal includes an appetizer, choice of two vegetables (from creamed potatoes, sliced tomatoes, and garden peas), rolls and butter, dessert, and beverage. The beef steak came with many real mushrooms in the mushroom sauce and was tender and juicy. Happily, the meat was not loaded with tiny bits of indigestible gristle. The mushroom sauce blended with the precise charbroiler cooking to make a very pleasing effect. An optional plate serving of lettuce and tomatoes was 35¢. The lettuce was fresh and the French dressing adequate; at least it wasn't all mayonnaise.

The bacon and tomato sandwich was served as requested, and was well filled with garden goodies. For dessert I sampled the apple pie, which was excellent. The filling was delicious and creamy, and the crust neither too doughy nor burnt. Coffee is reasonable too: cup 15¢, pot 25¢. Tea, hot or iced, is 15¢.

We returned to the dome for the rest of the trip to Atlanta. It has been a good day so far: we are about on schedule, the food is good, and the scenery interesting.

The dome car is actually Southern Railway property. It differs from its cousins on the SUPER CHIEF by having no carpeting anywhere--all linoleum. I find this mildly irritating. It would cost little more--or even less than present costs--to keep that car floor covered with carpet, and it would provide a more pleasant and quieter ride. Seats in the dome are two abreast, thus seating 24 up there. The rest of the car is set up with "parlor" type seats--big swivel chairs, a single row on each side of the car. And beneath the dome, on the lower level, is the uniquely named "Saddle and Stirrup Room" which could provide a pleasant nursery area for travelers with young children.

On board I found a little publicity blurb issued by Central of Georgia about NANCY's new station in Atlanta, and how we'll love it. We arrived in Atlanta at noon and I looked for the "new" station. It was there, but not new new, and a letdown. We even have to walk up a long stairs to street level. (An elevator there was crowded and I was too anxious for a look at Atlanta to wait.)

It had been a good trip. I'll remember the NANCY HANKS II for a long time, and hope to ride it again.

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Correction to figure captions on pages 9 and 12: Photo 5--there was one more City of San Francisco that left Chicago April 30 and arrived at Oakland May 2; however after April 30 the Berkeley station and others on the route were closed for business, and this was the last "City" that could be boarded at those stops. Accordingly, photo 5 is not the last train to stop at these stations, since the May 2 City did so, but only to discharge passengers.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK ***

"We feel that this network of trains--which has been developed through months of intensive analysis--provides a solid base upon which to build and expand the scope and quality of intercity passenger service. This new system can and will succeed because it unifies for the first time the operation and promotion of the nation's rail passenger service. Now, a single management can devote its energy exclusively to serving the passenger. Refurbishing of terminals and equipment and innovative improvements of ticketing, reservation, and food services can be attained on a systemwide basis.

We know these changes which are vital to upgrading rail service cannot be accomplished overnight. We are optimistic, however, that continuing improvements will attract hundreds of thousands of people who have not recently--or ever--relied on railroad transportation. We think the Amtrak system will become increasingly attractive to those who travel for business and pleasure, young people and older people, families and travel groups."

--David W. Kendall, Chairman of the Board of Amtrak, in the introduction to the first Amtrak schedule

"Although this is the first time a national railroad schedule has been used in the United States, the concept is currently utilized by the various U.S. airlines. It is also used by railroads in countries like Canada and France which operate nationwide systems."

--From the press release announcing the Amtrak schedule, Apr. 21

"Amtrak is a fraud designed for the abolition of the passenger train service in America."

--Ralph Nader, speaking at Mills College, Oakland, April 28

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(continued from page 9)
southward to San Jose, its first stop. (5) The last SP Cascade pulls out of the Oakland yards to pick up passengers for the northward trip on April 30, a half hour late--held up by the latecoming San Joaquin Daylight and picture-taking ceremonies following its arrival. The 10-car train, drawn by engines 3206 and 3205, was the last passenger train to stop at Berkeley, Richmond, Martinez, and a number of other stations along the route to Portland that will not be serviced by Amtrak. (6) The first Amtrak through train from Seattle to San Diego is seen early Sunday morning, May 2, running at speed through Berkeley, right on schedule. Engine 3205 is pulling, one of the pair used on the last Cascade. Under a threatening gray sky it presents a colorful picture of orange UP cars, silver SP, and green Northern Pacific cars. (7) The second Amtrak train to leave the Bay Area, and the first Oakland-Chicago train under the new system has just left Oakland on May 1, right on time, and is seen speeding past the now-deserted Berkeley depot. A single "F" unit pulls the short train, which includes a dome lounge car in the consist. (See correction on p. 10)

(About the photos: nos. 1,2,5 and 6 were made on 35mm black and white film with an Exakta and Zeiss Tessar 50mm lens; the rest were made on black and white film with a Soligor 66 2¼x2¼ SLR camera with an 80mm Kaligar lens. In the dim light photos, nos. 1 and 5, Tri-X film was used and rated at ASA 1600.)

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS RECEIVES SUPPORT OF DISTINGUISHED ADVISORS

NARP announced just after our last issue went to press that a group of distinguished citizens has agreed to join with the Association in an advisory capacity to help save and improve passenger trains.

Among the new members are Lewis Mumford, Henry Luce III, Bill Mauldin, Ogden Nash, Roy Wilkins, Melvin Belli, Bruce Catton, Huntington Hartford, Henry Steele Commager, Vincent Price, and others.

In other news, Scott Schiechl, San Francisco Regional Chairman of NARP, announced a statewide campaign to gain support for trains not in the Amtrak network. San Joaquin Valley service is being pushed by a bill introduced into the California legislature by Senator Zenovich of Fresno (bill SB 1221). NARP is asking support for this bill from citizens writing Zenovich and other legislators. It would take not over $600,000 of state funds to finance this service. NARP hopes to reinstate the Del Monte train also.

page 12

the Amtrak arrow-type trademark. Quoting from the ad: "In over 300 cities, convenient trains speed you to midtown in all kinds of weather. And you never get 'stacked up' over the railway station." The ad was simply a worded announcement with no illustrations.

The addition of routes through state subsidies is receiving support. Gov. Sargent of Massachusetts expressed support for a Boston to New York route through Worcester, Springfield, & Hartford, Conn. Ohio, Illinois, New York, Pennsylvania, and Michigan have pledged to pool funds to cover subsidy of a daily N.Y.-Chicago train thru Cleveland (that city's last PC train left there 1:15pm April 30). Even Gov. Reagan of California has softened his stand on public transportation to say that a balanced transportation system concept will now be the state's policy, instead of the automatic reliance on freeways as the only feasible mode of travel.

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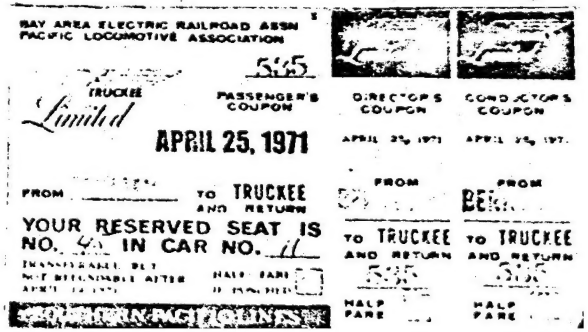
THE LAST EXCURSION ON SOUTHERN PACIFIC

The Truckee Limited, an excursion from San Francisco/Oakland to Truckee and return on April 25, was an enormous success. The train was an early sellout, and the 750 riders were treated to an extra 3½ hours of delightful travel when through some mixup in orders the train sped on past the Richmond stop, leaving 100 perplexed excursionists waiting, or running after the train waving red sweaters. Fortunately, the San Joaquin Daylight was close behind, and it picked up the group and transported them to Martinez, where the excursion train waited. The maneuvers of the two trains, plus the southbound Cascade which simultaneously arrived, kept Martinez trainwatchers gaping.

Snow began falling as the 21-car train gained altitude in the Sierras. Two full diners and two full lounges were constantly busy on the 16½-hour trip. Two private Pullman cars were in the consist, and it was enlightening to observe the scores of people examining them and remarking upon the sleeping accommodations. One forgets how many individuals have never traveled by sleeping car. An excursion like this can be a useful educational device for getting people on the rails by demonstrating to them the pleasure of train travel. (See photo on page 8)


BAY AREA ELECTRIC RAILROAD ASSN
PACIFIC LOCOMOTIVE ASSOCIATION
565
TRUCKEE Limited
PASSENGER'S COUPON
DIRECTOR'S COUPON
CONDUCTOR'S COUPON
APRIL 25, 1971
FROM ____ TO TRUCKEE AND RETURN
YOUR RESERVED SEAT IS NO. 44 IN CAR NO. 11
TO TRUCKEE AND RETURN
HALF FARE

EDITORIAL: AMTRAK--AN INADEQUATE SYSTEM

There are a lot of uncertainties about the Amtrak experiment. On one point, however, there is general agreement: that the corporation is woefully underfinanced to do the job it's required by law to do.

This fact suddenly struck home about the last week of April when the imminence of thousands of rail employees losing their jobs and the loss of scores of passenger train routes was realized. When the railroads signed up with Amtrak and plans for dropping trains became finalized, lawmakers and unions as well as passengers, including many who never rode the trains while they were there, suddenly were up in arms and attempting to stop Amtrak at the last minute.

Whether it is good or bad that Amtrak's plan went through at this time without modification remains for history to decide. It is clear that there is only one alternative now available. That is to work within the bounds of the law that created Amtrak in order to build up a system worthy of the name.

The rail system we now have is still just a skeleton. There are many flaws in it, but much hopefulness that it can actually be built into the proper system that the Amtrak incorporators talk about. For this we will have to keep pressure upon legislators for needed service. We need also to talk up Amtrak, to ride it ourselves, to help publicize and push the new system.

A hopeful sign is that the Senate Commerce Committee has asked Amtrak to make a study of additional needed routes and to report back in two months. If Congress appears interested in expansion of the rail network, it may be in a mood to provide more funds for the ridiculously impoverished National Railroad Passenger Corporation.

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BACK ISSUES OF RTN are still available, first come, first served. Issues 1-10 are still in stock. The cost is 25¢ a copy, or five copies for $1.00. Some of these issues are in extremely short supply--especially the earliest numbers--and won't last long.

Address your order to Message Media, Dept. RTN, Post Office Box 9007, Berkeley, California 94709 U.S.A. These will be sent by 3rd class mail, so allow a little extra time for their arrival.

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO RTN are $4.00 a year. Introductory 9-month subscriptions are also available at $3.00.

TRAINS IN THE MEDIA

One of the most encouraging developments in recent years for passenger trains took place this past week, when the May issue of Sunset Magazine was published. The magazine offered a fine 6-page, well-illustrated article all about passenger trains, entitled "Is 1971 your year to discover or rediscover the railroad adventure?"

For those who don't know Sunset, it is an extraordinarily successful publication, called "The magazine of Western living", that covers the fields of travel, food and entertaining, homemaking, and gardening. It's published only for Western readers, and has several regional editions.

The importance of the train article is that as Sunset goes, so goes the West. It's a very accurate barometer and stimulator of the life style of the vast majority of Westerners. And the train story is the first one in memory (with the exception of short tourist-type runs) about serious rail travel. What's more, it's a very attractive and persuasive writeup: "The postwar generation may have ridden the excellent Canadian Pacific, Canadian National, or European trains but many have never boarded a long distance train at home. There seems to be a feeling that travel time is something to be endured, and that the vacation doesn't start until you arrive at your destination.

Many people who love to travel see things differently. The pleasures of leaving and adjusting to a new pace en route can be important vacation components."

The article shows 13 excellent photos of trains with people all enjoying themselves immensely in domes, coaches, diners, bedrooms. It tells about "Railpax" and even printed an advance schedule of the new Seattle to San Diego through train.

Single copies are 75¢ by mail to any address. Write Sunset Magazine, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

Life Magazine in its May 7 issue has a 6-page spread on the Paris Metro, as well as those in Montreal and Mexico City. It points out that the French are in demand throughout the world for their knowhow in designing fine subways. The article doesn't say so, but it's easy to draw the conclusion that the U.S. has nothing at all comparable to the beautiful and efficient systems pictured in color in Life. The article is recommended reading for all rapid transit enthusiasts.

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